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HOME STRETCH: INDIA BEGIN QUEST FOR WORLD CUP GLORY AGAIN

Rohit Sharma and Co will take on Australia in their opening game in Chennai on Sunday. India will be looking to win an ICC event after 10 years

MISSION TO END TROPHY DROUGHT

It has been 12 years since India won an ODI cricket World Cup, 10 since an ICC trophy (2013 Champions Trophy). In every tournament since, they have crumbled in do or die games. The hosts, however, have the advantage this time and have the arsenal in their squad to go all the way come November 19 at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad

GILL UNCERTAIN, OTHERS READY TO ROAR

- Rohit Sharma hasn't ruled out opener Shubman Gill, who is unwell. But it is unlikely that he will start in Chennai. Ishan Kishan may fill in
- Australia got better of India last time they played at the venue in March, but conditions could be different this time with all the rain in the city. Local lad R Ashwin could be the trump card | **P15**

TWO

VIRAT KOHLI AND ASHWIN WERE PART OF THE 2011 WC-WINNING SQUAD

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

SUPER 107

28 GOLD

38 SILVER

41 BRONZE

INDIA CELEBRATES ASIAD CENTURY

- India crossed the 100-medal mark when the **women's kabaddi team won gold** beating Chinese Taipei. India won 12 medals including six gold, highest in a day this edition
- **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty** beat South Korea's Choi Solgyu-Kim Wonho 21-18, 21-16 in men's doubles final
- **Indian kabaddi team** reclaimed title after beating last edition's champions Iran in the final
- Indian men's cricket team won gold beating Afghanistan
- Jyothi Surekha and Ojas Deotale won individual gold

A momentous achievement for India at the Asian Games! The people of India are thrilled that we have reached a remarkable milestone of 100 medals

– Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Heartiest congratulations to the Indian contingent for crossing 100-medal mark at the #AsianGames

– Naveen Patnaik, Odisha CM

PM's vision and the facilities provided through schemes like Khelo India and TOPS, along with the hard work and determination of the players made sure that India won 100 medals. I salute all sportspersons for making history in these Asian Games

– Anurag Thakur, Sports Minister

100 REASONS TO REJOICE

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Hangzhou

IN some ways, it's rather poetic that some of India's final medals were won by Jyothi Vennam, R Praggnanandhaa and the men's doubles badminton pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty. All of them either represent India's future or created history to be on top of the podium as the Asian Games came to a close from an Indian perspective. In the end, they had 107 medals. For the record, this is the best ever Asian Games in terms of overall as well as gold won.

When Saturday morning dawned in the foothills of the Fushu mountain range, a day of promise, as expected, bore fruit immediately. Seventeen-year-old Aditi Swami won a bronze in the women's individual compound to open the account. By the time India's compound archers had locked away the equipment, the national anthem had echoed around the mountains twice. Both Jyothi and Ojas Deotale added to their kitty, with a third gold each which jointly made them the most successful Indian athletes of the Games.

Even as both kabaddi teams expectedly won gold (not before the India v. Iran men's match descended into a farce), the best action came from badminton. Rankireddy and Shetty have had a 2023 to savour. **P15**

WITH THIS ISSUE

BITING THE BULLET

PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

A mother and child being evacuated in south Israel | AP

Hamas men atop a destroyed Israeli tank | AP

Hamas attack kills 100 Israelis

● TERRORISTS BREACH GAZA BORDER FENCE ● ENTER ISRAEL THROUGH LAND, AIR AND SEA ● TAKE SOLDIERS, CIVILIANS HOSTAGE ● 198 KILLED IN RETALIATORY STRIKES

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

A massive terror assault at dawn on Saturday when the arguably most protected and alert nation was observing a major holiday left at least 100 Israelis dead and 900 others injured. In its retaliatory strikes, Israel killed at least 198 people and wounded 1,610 others in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian health ministry claimed.

The day began with a massive wave of attack from the Hamas outfit that controls the Gaza Strip. It fired thousands of rockets while its terrorists parallelly infiltrated the heavily fenced border at several locations by air, land and sea.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said they were at war. "We are at war. In war, one needs to be level headed. I call on all citizens of Israel to unite in order to achieve our highest goal — victory in the war," he said.

Security tightened at Israel consulate in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Security has been beefed up at the office of the Consulate General of Israel on Murphy Road at Halasuru in the city in view of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. City Police Commissioner B Dayananda has directed the jurisdictional Halasuru sub-division police to keep a close watch on the office.

Hamas commander Mohammed Deif called it Operation Al-Aqsa Storm. The Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem is the third holiest site in Islam.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock at the attack. "Deeply shocked by the news of terrorists attacks in Israel. Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour," he said. The Indian Embassy in Tel Aviv urged all Indian nationals in Israel to remain vigilant and observe all safety protocols as advised by local authorities. There are close to 18,000 Indians in Israel, which includes caregivers employed by Israeli elders, diamond traders, IT professionals and students. Besides, there are approximately 85,000 Jews of Indian origin. Air India cancelled its flights to Tel Aviv. Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said 27 people from the state were stranded in Bethlehem.

The terrorists managed to penetrate the fence and even flew into Israel through paragliders. Video clips of the border fence being blown up at a particular location and Hamas gunmen on motorbikes and pickup trucks riding into Israel through the breach trended on social media. They also used speedboats to cross into the coast. The attackers took dozens of Israeli soldiers and civilians as hostages. Besides, two Hamas men entered a house in the southern city of Ofakim and held the residents hostage. A similar hostage situation was reported from the Be'eri kibbutz.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said their troops were fighting in 22 locations. "Our goals are that all the terrorists will be killed, that all the communities will be rid of terrorists," the IDF said.

12 charred to death in cracker godown blaze at Attibele

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

TWELVE people were charred to death when a major fire broke out at a cracker shop-cum-godown at Attibele on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Saturday.

The victims were working in the godown on the service road along Hosur Main Road. The condition of one more worker is said to be critical.

The bodies of the victims were charred beyond recognition. However, some of them have been identified as Vediyappan, Vijay Raghavan, Sachin, Akash, Prakash, Adikeshavan and Elambarandhi. All said to be from Tamil Nadu.

Around 20 workers were at the shop-cum-godown when the fire broke out at 3.30 pm. Four others, including the shop owner, suffered burns.

Traffic on the highway was disrupted for more than five hours. Sources said the blaze at the cracker shop-cum-godown led to piling up of vehicles for more than six km on the highway. Around nine fire tenders were pressed into service. Some fire tenders from neighbouring Tamil Nadu were also rushed to the spot. Fire force personnel managed to put out the fire around 8.30 pm.

According to sources, the fire broke out at Balaji Crackers owned by Naveen Kumar of Attibele. The plot is owned by Ramaswamy Reddy, who rented it out for the shop-cum-godown. More than six vehicles, including a truck, loaded with crackers were destroyed in the blaze. **P5**

Fire force personnel at the cracker shop at Attibele on Saturday

Raw alcohol, millet flour exempt from GST: Council

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

THE GST Council on Saturday decided to not levy tax on millet flour when sold in loose, but it will attract 5% tax when sold in prepackaged and labeled form, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Extra Neutral Alcohol (also known as raw alcohol), used for making liquor will be kept out of the GST ambit, the council said. GST's law committee will examine suitable amendment in law to exclude it from the GST ambit. However ENA for industrial use will attract 18% GST.

GST on molasses has been cut from 28% to 5%. It will increase liquidity with mills and enable faster clearance of cane dues to sugarcane farmers.

"Liquor industry had a lot to cheer as Council decided to not levy GST on ENA supplied to alcohol manufacturers. Also it was clarified that job work for conversion of barley to malt would be liable to GST at 5% and not 18%. Decision to reduce GST to 5% on molasses would help the sugar industry and sugarcane farmers. Similarly reduction of GST on millet-based flour should bring relief for industry and health conscious people," said Pratik Jain, Partner, PWC.

In a bid to facilitate maritime trade and incentivise the use of coastal routes, the Council also recommended changes regarding foreign-going vessels. Previously, when a foreign-going vessel converted to coastal run, it was liable to pay 5% Integrated GST (IGST) on the value of the vessel.

However, the Council now announced conditional IGST exemption for foreign flag, foreign going vessels converting to coastal run, provided they are reconverted to foreign going vessels within six months. It also clarified that imitation zari thread will attract 5% GST rate. **P7**

Railways allowed input tax credit

The Council also decided to tax all goods and services supplied by the Indian Railways under the Forward Charge Mechanism, allowing them to avail input tax credit under the GST framework

EXPRESS READ

ISRO gears up for Gaganyaan crew safety test

Bengaluru: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing for its first flight test vehicle abort mission on October 25 as a run up to India's first manned space mission Gaganyaan, expected to be launched at the end of 2024 or early 2025. According to ISRO sources, the Flight Test Vehicle Abort Mission-1 (TV-D1), which is in the final stages of preparation, will be the first of four abort missions. It will have no crew on board, and is meant to evaluate rescue procedures and ensure the safety of astronauts. **P10**

Prof crashes car into 3 on college campus

Bengaluru: Tension prevailed at the Maharani Cluster University for Women on Seshadri Road opposite Freedom Park when a 52-year-old English professor ran his car into two students and a guest faculty member on Saturday morning. **P5**

Sikkim govt to probe dam construction

Guwahati: The Sikkim government will probe the "substandard" construction of Chungthang dam that was washed away by the flash floods and punish the culprits, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang said on Saturday.

Siddu: Caste census will not divide society

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said that the caste census will not divide society, but it will help the government know their socio-economic status based on which schemes for their welfare can be formulated.

Refuting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim that the caste census will divide society, Siddaramaiah told reporters here that poverty alleviation programmes are formulated after considering certain communities' backwardness and their economic status.

He said that it is necessary for the government to have data related to political and socio-economic conditions of the people after 76 years of Independence. This data will help in bringing people from socio-economically backward castes into the mainstream.

On the Karnataka Permanent Backward Classes Commission's report, he said it will be out in November.

CONTINUED ON: P6

Insurance for tourists in two tiger reserves

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru/Mysuru

IN a first in the country, the Karnataka Forest Department launched an insurance scheme on Friday and Saturday for tourists visiting the Bandipur and Nagarahole tiger reserves.

"The increase in the number of cases of man-animal conflict has become a cause for concern among those visiting the two reserves. There have been instances of tourists questioning us if they are safe and secure in the reserves. To address their concern, we have launched this insurance scheme," said a forest official.

Bandipur Tiger Reserve Director S Prabhakaran said anyone booking a trip or a room in the reserves will be insured. On a safari bus ticket, an additional Rs 10 will be collected as insurance premium. However, the corpus amount of insurance is Rs 1 crore. On an average 1.4-1.5 lakh tourists visit Bandipur annually, he said.

₹70 cr per annum scam in Bescom, alleges forum

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

ALLEGATIONS of irregularities in awarding contracts for repairing transformers in 45 centres in as many taluks under the Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) have come to light. This infraction could cause the government a loss of around Rs 70 crore per annum as the annual expenditure for repairing transformers will go up from around Rs 60 crore to Rs 135-140 crore, according to an organisation that has filed a complaint before the Lokayukta.

The allegation is that many of the 45 successful bidders had applied for tenders at a centre with the same internet protocol (IP) address in Bengaluru. The bids have been applied allegedly under the guidance of three contractors cum bidders, who are said to have "raised money" to be paid to the top brass in the Energy Department, stated the organisation, Raitha Hitharakshana Vedike. Apparently, the department has already started issuing contracts to the 45 contractors, it added.

Director, technical wing, Bescom, HG Ramesh told The New Sunday Express that the issue has come to his notice. "An internal inquiry has begun with the help of cybersecurity police," he said, adding that private parties have filed a complaint before the Lokayukta. But Chief General Manager (Operations), Bescom, Nagaraj, categorically denied any irregularities and said, "Nothing of that sort has happened." **P7**